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ABSTRACT

The Parent Leadership Training Program was developed to promote academic success among at-risk children, specifically, Mexican Migrant children. It attempted to help parents learn how to be effective partners in their children's academic and developmental growth. The program provided a series of meetings to help families understand the schools and learn how they could participate in school affairs and assist their children at home. The evaluation of the program consists of: (1) analysis of the characteristics of the Hispanic families who participated in the 3-year development phase; (2) analysis of program strategies most effective in reaching parents and sustaining their interest; and (3) discussion of the implications of findings. The characteristics most predictive of a high level of parental involvement were: (1) mothers' years of education; (2) mothers' ability to drive a car; (3) parents' education received in the United States; (4) both parents' ability to communicate, speak, read, and write in English; (5) years of residence in the area; and (6) the parenting style. Program strategies considered most effective were: (1) continual personal contact to preregister parents; (2) preplanned child care arrangements; (3) provision of transportation to meetings for several consecutive weeks; (4) provision of ample time for socialization and refreshments; (5) giving take-home materials, gifts, and doorprizes; (6) giving recognition and thanks to workers and parents; (7) small-group discussion and socialization. The evaluation findings indicate a replication model for future implementation of the program at other locations. Data tables are included. (ALL)

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For further information contact:

Dr. Beverly B. McConnell
SW 615 Cityview
Pullman, WA 99163
(509) 334-2750

Additional copies of this evaluation may be ordered from:

Citizens Education Center
310 First Avenue S., Suite 330
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 624-9955

AN EVALUATION OF THE PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates a program called "Parent Leadership Training" in which parents attended a series of meetings to discuss ways of helping children learn through greater involvement with the school, and through home activities. The program was developed by Citizens Education Center, of Seattle, and the evaluation was funded by the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust.

PART ONE of the evaluation analyzes the characteristics of families who participated in the three year development phase, parents' participation with the school, and family interaction designed to reinforce children's learning. In this phase, the program was targeted primarily at Hispanic families of migrant and seasonal farm workers.

PART TWO of the evaluation describes programs during the first year replication phase, which was participated in by twelve, very diverse, school districts throughout the state. This study focuses on analyzing which program strategies appear to have been most effective in reaching more parents, and sustaining their interest through a series of meetings.

PART THREE discusses the implications of findings from this study for questions of concern to School Districts, Funding Agencies, The Sponsoring Organization that developed the program, and for possible legislation providing future funding support for parental involvement.

FINDINGS

PART ONE

The group of parents who participated in the development phase of Parent Leadership Training were primarily Hispanic families in which most parents had been educated in Mexico. Nearly 20% had received no formal education; most had

received education only in elementary grades. Only 11% had finished high school or gone beyond it.

Of the parents, 75% spoke little or no English, 25% were fluent in English. Only 20% were able to read and write English. Approximately half had lived in the Yakima Valley of Washington for less than ten years, the remainder had lived there for more--10-30+ years.

Over 90% lived with incomes below the poverty line. Approximately 20% of the mothers could not drive a car. About half the familes felt they had a large network of friends and families to provide assistance in any emergency, the remainder reported having few to none by way of families they could turn to for support.

Almost 95% were intact families with two parents. The "parenting style" in 70% of the families was described as "structured democratic"--with clear rules for their children consistently applied, lots of encouragement given children, much opportunity for interaction with adults and much communication between parent and child. Of the remaining families, 16% were described as "authoritarian"--rules arbitrarily applied, relatively little encouragement and more punishment, less interaction and communication. The remaining 14% were described as Laissez Faire--no particular rules and little consistency in response to children's behavior, inconsistency in interaction and level of communication.

Families expected their children to finish high school in most cases, and about 40% expected the children to continue their education beyond high school.

About half of the families reported using the library; also about 40% of the families reported that parents read to their children at home. Another 48% reported that older siblings or other persons read to children.

Similar percentages reported helping children with their homework; about half relied on parents, half on other siblings or others.

The home and family characteristics that were most predictive of parents who demonstrated a high level of parental involvement (doing things at the school, plus home activities supporting education) were as follows, in order of significance:

The years of education by the mother

Whether the mother can drive a car

Education in the U.S. rather than Mexico

Both parents' ability to communicate speak, read, write in English

The years the family has lived in area

The parenting style of family

Educational expectations for the child was a borderline variable--highly related to higher parental involvement, but not quite to the level of statistical significance.

Variables which proved to be positively related to level of parent involvement, but not statistically significant, include parents reading to children at home, use of the public library, higher income level, existence of a social support network.

The Parent Leadership Training Program competed for time with English classes required by Immigration laws for farm workers wanting to secure or retain permanent work status in the U.S. For this reason, the majority of parents enrolled (over 90%) attended four meetings or less. This length of intervention did not prove to significantly affect level of parental involvement.

PART TWO

Twelve sites with widely divergent school characteristics were selected to replicate the Parent Leadership Training Model during the 1989-90 school year. Six of the sites were urban, four rural and two suburban. Half served primarily a minority population, half a predominantly non-minority population. Three were targeted primarily to non-English speaking families within a larger school population. One was

targeted on parents of children in Special Education. The remainder were for the parents of all children.

Of these twelve sites, ten furnished detailed information about program implementation. These ten were classified as highly effective, medium effective, and low effectiveness based on a composite ranking on three indices (the percentage of the parents they reached through their program, the percentage of parents who came back repeatedly, and the self report of each site on whether they were pleased or disappointed with various aspects of their program).

There were three programs rated as highly effective, four as medium effective, and three as low. The program characteristics were then related to the program's effectiveness ranking to observe patterns. If certain program characteristics were consistently associated with more effective programs, and absent in less effective programs, these characteristics were identified as implementation strategies likely to lead to more successful programs.

The RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES associated with higher effectiveness included: preregistering parents--getting a comittment that they would attend and finding out how many children would be needing child care; personalizing recruitment for the program through personalized invitations, phone calls, home visits, face-to-face recruitment at school open house or similar functions. Follow-up calls to those who didn't respond to the first invitation, who came but did not come back, who registered, but did not come. Continued contact and invitations throughout the series.

The CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS that were associated with more effective programs included: preplanning for estimated numbers to assure ample supervision, preplanned and prepared activities, served appealing but low sugar snacks. There was no clear pattern of satisfaction related to whether child care providers were paid or volunteers. Earlier programs (over before 9:00 P.M.) were more satisfactory for child care.

The CONVENIENCE FACTORS most associated with effective programs included provision of transportation (especially important for minority non-English speaking parents). Meeting on a weeknight, on consecutive weeks, was more successful than more widely spread meetings, inconsistent schedules, or weekend nights. Libraries were favored meeting places over gyms or auditoriums for acoustics and arrangement for conversational seating.

The more effective programs consistently allowed the most time for SOCIALIZATION AND REFRESHMENTS. They took into account cultural food preferences, if serving a multiethnic population. They incorporated socialization into the meeting time through conversational seating, instead of allowing socialization only on breaks, before or after meetings. They used icebreakers and seating arrangements to help people get acquainted.

The more effective programs gave away more things. TAKE HOMES included gifts of wordless books, duplicated articles and other handouts related to meeting topics. Door prizes and small gifts were more often used by effective programs to add interest and incentives for attendance.

The more effective programs gave RECOGNITION AND THANKS to more people--parents who attended, as well as presenters and volunteers who helped. Greater volunteer involvement was associated with more visible and consistent means of giving recognition and thanks.

CONTENT AND CONDUCT of meetings associated with higher program effectiveness included less time in presentations (audience primarily listening), and more time in small group discussion and socialization in which many people are involved and talking.

The most successful topics in terms of interest to parents were ones which elicited more conversation and relating of personal experiences: this varied according to the population of parents served. Topics descriptive of the school system and personnel were highly interesting to parents who had themselves experienced other

systems. Topics on activities in which parents are expected to participate such as parent/teacher conferences or IEP planning and problem solving were high interest topics. Positive Discipline, Learning Styles, also produced much sharing and participation. Successful programs found some means to assess parents' interests and concerns and adapted program topics to the local interests.

Successful programs for non-English speakers found ways to minimize the need for translation: simultaneous presentation in native languages, more use of video--less of translated verbal presentations, more time for private and small group conversation so parents could ask questions in native language without need for multiple translation.

Nearly every site reported that the meetings took on some characteristics of a support group with very open sharing and sometimes emotional exchanges of personal information. This was facilitated by educators/presenters introducing themselves primarily as parents with children relating to other parents with children. Educators shared family pictures, shared personal experiences and set the tone for the meeting. Videos of classrooms in which parents could see the warmth and concern for their children evidenced by teachers and others helped create a bonding within the groups. This program element did not differ greatly by degree of program effectiveness--it appeared to be a characteristic of the model conveyed to all sites through the training.

The INITIATION of parent involvement programs came most often from the school administration; secondly from a core of teachers and outreach workers, and about a third of the time from parents.

The EFFORT REQUIRED to carry out this type of parental involvement program fell most often on THE TEAM--those chosen to go to the training. A large amount of volunteer time went into the program at every site, even those with grant funds to pay for personnel or costs of support services. Most programs felts that some degree of

funding was essential to supplement volunteered time, services and program materials.

The programs were LEAST SUCCESSFUL at involving teaching staff in the programs at most sites. However, some very successful sites were run entirely by teachers and aides.

PART THREE

Discussed implications of program findings for different audiences.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS interested in initiating a program were advised to make decisions based on what would provide the broadest base of support for the program: the importance of obtaining committment from policy boards, administrators and teaching staff; the preference for assigning responsibility to a team rather than a single individual, using program funds for partial compensation to many people rather than total compensation to one.

FUNDING AGENCIES interested in the "growth" potential of a pilot program, and the wider dissemination capability of the program should be pleased with this effort. The difficulties encountered in the development phase helped to strengthen the training and materials to enable replication sites to avoid program pitfalls. The large number of sites applying for replication attests to the general importance attached to parental involvement by present day educators. The generally high level of satisfaction by local sites with their first year efforts indicates that the training is effective, the model replicable.

THE SPONSORING AGENCY, CITIZENS EDUCATION CENTER, was advised that the program had not yet developed an adequate model to effectively engage teachers as an active partner in the parental involvement program. It also has not yet developed the training materials and methods that would enable parents to take over as presenters, managers of such programs.

LEGISLATORS could find this evaluation highly supportive of the feasibility of involving parents that in the past have taken little part in school programs, including parents of children considered to be most "at risk". Funding of programs for parental involvement should apply guidelines that ensure broad based participation and comittment to a program; that discourages single purpose use of funding (such as hiring one person to be parent trainer); that enables districts to attend conferences or training to learn from other's experience before initiating their own programs.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM?

The Parent Leadership Training Project was developed "to promote academic success among children at risk of school failure by helping their parents learn how to be effective partners in their children's academic and developmental growth". (CECN, March 1988)

WHO INITIATED THE PROGRAM?

It was originally started in the Yakima Valley, an area of Washington State in which many Spanish speaking migrant farm worker families live and work. Washington State Migrant Council operates a network of child care centers and other services for migrant families in this area. The project was developed jointly by Citizens Education Center Northwest (a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting better education through citizen action) and the Washington State Migrant Council (a nonprofit agency also statewide serving migrant families with a variety of programs).

WHY WAS THE PROGRAM NEEDED?

Washington State Migrant Council's interest in developing the program was because they felt the parents, particularly Hispanic migrant parents, showed a very great interest in their children's education through active participation in preshool centers. But few felt comfortable enough to continue this involvement in their children's education in partnership with teachers and other educators once the child had entered the public schools. Hispanic families have the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group within the United States. Washington State Migrant Council felt that the

program was needed to provide a bridge to help families understand the schools and learn how they could participate more in school affairs as well as ways to help their children at home once they went beyond the preschool level.

Citizens Education Center was enlisted as a partner in developing such a program as a means of providing better education through citizen action. As the program began to show promise in its pilot phase, Citizens Education Center sought funding to continue the development of the program, this time with an eye to creating a parent involvement "model" that would be replicable at other school districts. They did this in response to the growing interest in the importance of parental involvement in children's education as research builds showing what an essential element it is in children's academic success.

WHERE AND WHEN WAS THE PROGRAM CARRIED OUT?

The pilot phase of the program was carried out primarily in the Yakima Valley in several small towns which are heavily impacted by Hispanic populations of migrant and seasonal farm workers. The first all-volunteer program was carried out in 1986 in Sunnyside, Washington. Funding through Citizens Education Center began in 1987 for expansion of the program to other towns in the Yakima Valley, and for development of training materials that would lead eventually to its replication statewide. The "development phase" of the program continued in the Yakima Valley from 1987 through 1989 (school years). The replication phase of the program was carried out in the 1989-90 school year.

WHAT WAS THE FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION?

The Fred Meyer Charitable Trust added funds to carry out a program evaluation in its support to Citizens Education Center. It wanted to know how effective the program was at increasing parental involvement in the schools among a high-risk population (in this case, the primarily Hispanic parents in schools in theYakima Valley) .

The evalutor proposed to use extensive interviews along with documentation of process to obtain insights into what influenced parental involvement in this parent group.

PARENT INTERVIEWS

Parent interviews were carried out with a sample of 37 families who had been involved to a greater or lesser degree in the Parent Leadership Training Program (PLTP) over a three-year period. The sample was selected two-thirds from parents who had been "active" in the PLTP program and one-third from those who had attended only one or two meetings, and therefore were considered to be "inactive" in the program.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

From each family, one or two children enrolled in elementary school were selected for obtaining more detailed information--on how they were doing in school, how parents worked with that child at home to further his or her education. The teacher of each of these children was then interviewed to get the school's perspective on the child's educational progress and the role parents played in facilitating their child's learning (through participation in school activities involving parents, as well as through communication with the teacher, help with homework, etc.)

SCHOOL ADMINSTRATOR INTERVIEWS

Finally, administrators from each school were interviewed to see what their perspective was on the Parent Leadership Training Program, its effectiveness on increasing a partnership between parents and educators, and any school changes that might have occurred as a result of the program.

DOCUMENTATION OF PROCESS

At the time the evaluation was designed, the programs were still very much in evolution--incorporating changes as dictated by community pressures and from staff member's appraisals of what was "working" and "not working". Parent Leadership Training, therefore, could not be evaluated as a fixed "product", but had to be

evaluated as a "process". The difference is that the evaluation could not look at "end results" of a fixed program (or "product") since the program was continually changing design, but needed to capture what the essential "process" was by which a program model emerged that was more, or less, effective.

To do this, the evaluator was given full access to all project records (attendance, program materials, etc.), and through interviews with Parent Leadership staff kept track of how the program was being implemented--and, as it changed from one design to another, why these changes had been made.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

PART ONE of the Evaluation report responds to the evaluation questions relating to the Yakima Valley sites:

What are the factors which influence parental involvement in this population group? and

What evidence is there that Parent Leadership Training has influenced the parental involvement observed?

PART TWO of the Evaluation report relates to the replication phase of Parent Leadership Training:

What success has the program had at developing a model that can be transported to other sites? and

What can be learned from the experience of first-year replication sites on the strategies that lead to effective program implementation with a variety of population groups?

PART THREE of the Evaluation report relates to what value the findings from this program can be to different audiences interested in parent involvement, answering such questions as:

SCHOOL DISTRICTS: *What appear to be essential elements in successful implementation of Parent Leadership Training? Does the program result in more participation by minority parents?*

FUNDING AGENCIES: *Has the money invested in this program resulted in a program which increases the participation of minority parents in their children's education? Had the funding of this program resulted in a replicable model that can be transported to other districts?*

CITIZENS EDUCATION CENTER: *What features of the program appear to be in need of improvement, and what changes might be tried to overcome these deficiencies? What type of support is necessary from a training agency to facilitate trainers implementing Parent Leadership Training Programs?*

LEGISLATORS: *What has this program demonstrated about the type of support that would lead to greater development of parental involvement in schools? What guidelines could be used in the development, management and evaluation of such programs?*

PART ONE

THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF THE

PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Original Design

The original design for Parent Leadership Training called for recruitment of parents of children in the Washington State Migrant Council preschool centers, who would then enter into a year long program of parent leadership training: four sessions in the winter, and another four sessions in the spring, while the children were still in preschool, followed by a series of six training sessions in the fall after the children had entered kindergarten in the public (or Catholic) schools in the area. This 14-program series was to reach approximately 100 families a year in three different valley locations, initially meant to be Sunnyside, Mabton, and Wapato in Washington State.

During the school year 1987-88, Parent Leadership did serve parents of children from the preschool centers in Sunnyside and Mabton. One staff member was hired to be a trainer in this area. The plan was to add a second trainer when the program expanded to three sites, and the fourteen-sessions-a-year format in the 1988 and 1989 school years.

First Modification of the Program

The Immigration Bill passed by Congress in 1986 to permit legalization of illegal immigrants, and to change the requirements for permanent work status in the United States for seasonal farm workers began to seriously interfere with the program in 1987. In order to obtain permanent alien status, permitting work in the United States, seasonal farm workers were required to take intensive instruction in English as a Second Language. Washington State Migrant Council began offering these classes in 1987. The classes were scheduled in the evening for three nights each week. Since these farm workers families were the same families targeted for Parent Leadership Training Classes (which would meet once a week for a series of four to six weeks), there was a conflict for the families--whether to go to Parent Leadership Training or to ESL classes (English as a Second Language).

The Parent Leadership Training Program (PLTP) had started before the ESL classes started. Some parents were loyal enough to PLTP to attempt to do both--but there is a natural energy limitation affecting parents doing farm labor all day and then attending evening meetings three or four nights a week.

The result was that the sessions were not well attended during that year. In Sunnyside, the program reached 75 different parents combining the attendance for the fall 1987 series (five sessions) and the spring 1988 series (six sessions), but only seven people continued from the fall to the spring series. Of the 75 participants, 64 (85%) came to only one or two meetings and then dropped out.

A series (six sessions) was held at Mabton in the Spring of 1988. This program drew 17 participants in all, but of these, 14 (82%) dropped out after one or two sessions.

The Washington State Migrant Council felt that since the livelihood of the migrant parents they served depended on getting legal work status, that the ESL classes would have to be first priority. They still strongly supported the concept of

Parent Leadership Training, but felt that as long as the ESL classes continued, it was not feasible to target the migrant parents of children in WSMC child care centers. It, therefore, recommended that the trainer try a training series with the "regular" Head Start parents at Mabton--since most of these parents were not affected by the Immigration Law requiring ESL classes.

The trainer did try a training series at the regular Head Start Center in the summer of 1983. It was conducted in Spanish, as the other programs had been--but this group were mostly bilingual, having lived in the United States longer than the migrant group, and some would have preferred the training in English. Another lesson learned was that one curriculum does not fit all--the training topics: *"What is Public Education?" and "Who Works for the School?"* were not big favorites since this group felt they already knew this information. However, attendance for this training was better. Out of 20 parents, 10 (50%) continued for three to five meetings.

Second Modification of the Program

Despite the poor attendance, Parent Leadership Training had developed its devoted core of parents who strongly believed it was on the right track and providing something that migrant and/or Hispanic families needed. A second try was therefore made to reach the migrant parents. This was to combine Parent Leadership Training with the ESL classes. This was possible because the guidelines for ESL instruction had an added requirement that participants be given some instruction in "civics", i.e., the public institutions of the United States. Since the public schools constitute public institutions, learning about them could be considered civics.

The PLTP trainer did a series of this combined training in Sunnyside and another in Mabton. A period of approximately an hour was taken out of the ESL classes, and she presented information about the schools. This was not too satisfactory--one because the time was too short (no more than three hours total during a course) and the subject matter too limited (information about the schools was

only a fraction of the curriculum for parent leadership training). It did reach a lot of parents.

A by-product of this phase of project development was that the combined program came to the attention of the White House committee promoting literacy. They were looking for programs that combined literacy training with a "whole family emphasis" and decided this program filled the bill. It therefore invited the PLTP trainer, and members of one of the migrant families, to attend a reception at the White House where it was honored as one of the "featured" literacy programs chosen from throughout the United States.

Because of the limits this approach placed on the model (brief time period and restriction of topics covered), it was not continued. Attendance was generally not available for these combined programs. As the evaluator felt they were not representative of the Parent Leadership Training Model, these parents have not been counted as participants in PLTP, although they clearly received some benefits.

Third Modification of the Program

With the concurrence of the funding agencies, Citizens Education Center staff attempted to re-establish the program among parents whose children were already in the public schools. Superintendents or other officials from Valley school districts were contacted, seeking invitations to hold parent leadership training sessions, in Spanish, for Hispanic parents in their elementary schools.

Most superintendents were very supportive of the concept of the program--somewhat doubtful as to its feasibility in that very few Spanish Speaking parents were active in any way in school parent groups, with the exception of advisory committees for the Migrant Education Programs. It was a requirement of the federal funding for migrant education that they have a parent advisory group. Because most of the migrants were Spanish speaking, these meetings were typically held in Spanish--and because they were held in Spanish, they tended to be the only type of parent meeting

ever attended by the Spanish speaking families in the district. The Hispanic parents who no longer qualified as migrants were not able to be involved in these parent groups.

One result of this decision to go with the schools instead of the preschool centers was a much shorter intervention that the "fourteen sessions during a school year" originally planned. The school programs ran from four to six sessions long, and the targeted audience was frequently changed from one series to the next (different school, different age group).

There were many other changes required in order to work with the schools. Toppenish wanted training in both English and Spanish, so parallel sessions were run, one for English speaking parents and one for Spanish speaking parents. Toppenish also wanted a series run for parents of Special Eduation students, which required development of a whole new series of materials geared to the special needs of parents with handicapped children. This included understanding parents' rights and responsibilities as related to the special laws for funding of handicapped programs; how to work with teachers on an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) required for children in Special Education, etc.

There was also the need to work out fields of responsibility--What would the school agree to do?; What would the PLTP trainer do?

Most school sites agreed to do recruitment for the program, which they interpreted to mean sending flyers home with children and putting a poster somewhere, plus a notice in the school newsletter (not all of which were published in Spanish). This typically yielded no parents for the first sessions, or at most one or two.

The PLTP trainer would then help the school plan an alternate recruitment strategy, explaning that in most cases Hispanic parents did not respond to general notices but to specific invitations, directed to them personally. The PLTP trainer frequently took on some of this personal recruiting--going to homes, making phone calls, to augment what the school was doing. Outreach workers were enlisted. Since

the PLTP trainer also had a weekly radio program in Spanish, she did recruiting through use of radio. Eventually, a parent group was recruited (the size of which almost invariably surprised the school officials who did not expect Spanish speaking parents to turn out in significant numbers).

Schools also agreed to make the space available; however, on more than one series, the trainer and parents arrived at the first meeting to find that the custodian had not been notified and the building was locked. Schools agreed to provide people to do child care, but as no advance registration was used for the meetings, it was hard to anticipate the numbers of children and the child care was not always adequate. The PLTP trainer took to preparing materials and activities for use by child care workers because mostly the school simply hired some people to babysit and did not pre-plan activities they could use that would appeal to children and make them want to come back.

Sometimes the schools agreed to provide the refreshments, but again guessing at numbers, it was easy not to have enough or not to have refreshments that were appealing. Children snack at school on crackers and juice, but this was not as well received by adults.

Despite these obstacles, every school administrator interviewed by the evaluator felt that Parent Leadership Training had been a success. One qualified this saying the program itself was successful, but not successful in his district because of lack of support for the program among some staff at the targeted school.

The Parent Leadership Training staff was philosophical; they felt they learned from every mistake and it helped to make the materials they were preparing for use by other districts more useful.

One lesson they learned is that Parent Leadership Training is not a one person job. When they recruited for replication sites, they insisted that a team of people come to be trained: an administrator, a teacher, a parent and a person from a community agency.

They also learned that it is important to plan for all the details, including the support services. The Yakima Valley trainer prepared what became a two page list of things to include in the planning and assign to different people:

> Make sure the time schedule does not conflict with another parent activity (the first session for one of the Valley series was scheduled the same night as the school play).
>
> Make sure the custodian knows to open the building.
>
> Make sure there are appropriate activities and snacks for children and be prepared to call in reinforcements if more children come than you had expected.
>
> Recruitment--beyond the notice home with children and announcement in the school newsletter, plan some additional, preferably personalized recruiting.
>
> Etc.--all of these things before you ever get to the training presentation itself.

During the first year of her employment, the Yakima Valley Parent trainer attempted to manage all of these tasks herself. At the replication sites, a minimum of four people took on the organization task, and these were invariably assisted by a great many more (one site routinely thanked everybody who had helped in some way in a little "Parent Leadership News Bulletin"--and the list ran over 50 names every time).

In summary, the program called Parent Leadership Training was quite different in each evolution. After this became clear, the evaluator voluntarily added to the evaluation task an analysis of what happened in the replication sites, because the most important product appeared to be the "model" that was developed through this trial and error evolution, and whether that "model" could be effectively implemented in the replication phase.

FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEW DATA IN THE YAKIMA VALLEY SITES

The sample of families interviewed was originally intended to be 45 families, of which 30 would be families considered "active" in PLTP, and 15 families "inactive". The definition for "active" was that the parent have attended three-fourths or more of the training meetings for the series in which he or she was enrolled, plus identification by the trainer as someone who had participated more in the discussions, or carried out the home learning activities, or followed through on some involvement with the school arising out of parent leadership training discussions. The definition for "inactive' was someone who had attended no more than one or two meetings.

The final number of families interviewed was 37; of these, 26 were considered "active" and ll "inactive". The reduction was necessary because there were fewer families available for interview than originally anticipated, particularly families classified as active. And the pool of possible families for interview was further reduced by inadequate addresses (most migrants use P. O. Box numbers instead of giving a street address) or people who had moved away.

The "outcome variable" of interest was the level of parent involvement. A ranking was made for each family as to whether they were above average, average, or below average (compared to other families in those districts) in their level of parent involvement. How this ranking was derived is explained in the next section.

The parent interview was then designed to capture many of the family characteristics which other parent involvement research has shown relate to children's school achievement. In addition, it had questions to capture information on implementation of many of the types of support for learning that were included in the PLTP training (these are also the types of parental activities other research has shown bolster children's learning). It included descriptions of specific kinds of involvement with the school, as well as information on either one or two of the children in the family now in elementary or preschool programs. These were coded so that statistical

correlations could be carried out to see which variables were significantly related to levels of Parental Involvement.

In addition to helping provide data for the rating of parents on level of parental involvement, the interviews with teachers provided a profile of how open to parental involvement the teachers were, and the steps they took to encourage it. The interviews with school administrators provided another perspective on the program, and the impact PLTP might have had on the schools in which training was held.

How was the rating determined that indicated a family's level of parental involvement (with the school) was low, average, or high?

In the interview with families participating in PLTP, parents were asked many specific questions about their participation in different types of school activities. They were then asked to rank their own level of parental involvement as follows:

"Would you describe your involvement in school activities as being: Not very involved _____ About average _____ Very Involved _____"

The family interview asked detailed questions about one or two of the children in the family who were in elementary school. The teachers of these children were then interviewed, and, among other questions, the teachers were asked to rank families as to level of parent involvement.

"Compared to other parents in your class, would you consider the involvement of these parents in their child's education as being: below average _____ average _____ above average _____"

The evaluator also ranked each family on level of parental involvement based on the responses to all of the items in the parent interview, including those related to activities in the home which supported academic achievement.

A composite rating was then made for each family from the parent's own rating, the ratings by the teachers, and the rating of the evaluator. The resulting ranking was then called the CPI (Composite Parent Involvement) rating, and this variable was

statistically related to a number of other variables to determine which family characteristics were significantly related to the level of parent involvement.

TECHNICAL NOTE: The statistical analysis used was computation of Cramer's V for ranked variable with multiple categories, using the SPSSX statistical package for mainframe computers.

WHAT FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO CPI?

LEVEL OF PARENT EDUCATION

There were 35 fathers, 37 mothers in the family interview sample. The country in which these parents received their education is shown below:

Table 1

COUNTRY IN WHICH PARENTS RECEIVED THEIR EDUCATION

FATHERS			MOTHERS		
Mexico	U.S.	Mexico & U.S.	Mexico	U.S.	Mexico & U.S.
30	5	0	26	9	2

[Correlation to CPI: for Fathers +0.33; Statistical Significance <0.01*.]
[Correlation to CPI: for Mothers +0.18; Not Statistically Significant.]

The number of years of education received by each parent is shown in the following table:

Table 2

NUMBER OF YEARS OF EDUCATION RECEIVED

None	1-6	7-11	12 yrs.	12+ years	None	1-6	7-11	12 yrs.	12+ yrs.
10	19	3	1	2	4	19	9	3	2

[Correlation to CPI: Mothers +0.39; Statistical Significance <0.01*.]
[Correlation to CPI: Fathers + 0.17; Not Statistically Significant.]

**A statistical significance of <0.01 means the probability that this relationship would have occurred by chance is less than one in 100. If the probability of chance relationship is more than five in 100, it is considered not statistically significant.*

In summary, the parents reached by PLTP had a very low level of education, the mothers having slightly more education than the fathers. Most of the parents had not gone beyond elementary school; 87% of the fathers, 57% of the mothers. Ten of the fathers and four of the mothers had had no schooling at all.

The mother's level of education proved to be the variable most predictive of the family's CPI rating; i.e., the higher the education level of the mother, the more likely a high rating on CPI.

The country in which the parent received their education was also significantly related to CPI--all five of the families in which the fathers received their education in the U.S. were rated as above average on parental involvement. The variable "country in which educated" did not reach the level of statistical significance for the mothers, although it was very close, <0.07.

DEGREE OF ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

The following shows the self reported ability of PLTP parents to speak English:

Table 3

ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH

FATHERS			MOTHERS		
No. Eng.	Little Eng.	Fluent Eng.	No. Eng.	Little Eng.	Fluent Eng.
12	17	6	19	6	12

As shown above, most of the parents in PLTP were very limited in their ability to speak English.

The degree of literacy in English among PLTP parents was even more limited as shown in the following table:

Table 4

ABILITY TO READ AND WRITE ENGLISH

FATHERS			MOTHERS		
None	Fair	Good	None	Fair	Good
28	2	5	21	6	10

A combined variable was created called the Language Index, which was based on both parents' ability to speak, read and write English. This was highly correlated to ratings on level of parental involvement. In general, the greater the ability to communicate in English, the higher the ratings on parental involvement. [Correlation of Language Index to CPI: +0.32 Statistical Significance <0.01.]

LENGTH OF TIME IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

As shown in the following table, most of the families had lived in the area for many years:

Table 5

YEARS THE FAMILY HAS LIVED IN THE AREA

1 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30+
19	20	5	3

This also proved to be highly correlated to parental involvement ratings; in general, the longer residence in the area, the higher the rating on parental involvement. [Correlation to CPI +0.32; Statistically Significant <0.01.]

THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE FAMILY

This included three variables. The first was poverty level, as determined by whether or not children in the family were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

It also included a variable called "network" based on whether the family felt they had friends or family they could call on for help if they had any kind of an emergency.

The third variable was whether the parent could drive a car.

All three of these variables have been found in other parental involvement research to be strongly related to the ability of the family to deal with community agencies (including schools) accessing services needed by their family.

The profile of families on these variables is shown in the tables below:

Table 6

FAMILIES WHOSE CHILDREN QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH

Free Lunch	Reduced Lunch	Not Eligible
33	1	3

[Correlation to CPI +0.07; Not Statistically Significant.]

Table 7

FAMILIES WITH A SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

None	Few Friends	Many
3	14	18

[Correlation to CPI +0.08; Not Statistically Significant.]

Table 8

PARENTS WHO CAN DRIVE A CAR

Fathers: Can Drive	Cannot Drive	Mothers: Can Drive	Cannot Drive
34	1	29	8

[Correlation fathers to CPI +0.02; Not Statistically Significant.]
[Correlation mothers to CPI + 0.35; Statistical Significance <0.01.]

As shown above, degree of poverty and the existence of a network of friends both were positively correlated to CPI, but not enough to be statistically significant. The mother's ability to drive a car, however, was the second highest predictor (after level of mother education) of the family rating on level of parental involvement.

PARENTING STYLE

Other research in parental involvement has shown that parenting style (i.e., the interaction pattern between parent and child) is highly predictive of children's academic achievement. PLTP discussions frequently dealt with elements of parenting style--such as the importance of providing children with clear rules (bed time, time and place for doing homework, limits on TV watching) and consistent enforcement of these rules. Other elements of parenting style have to do with amount of encouragement offered; the level of communication between parent and child and activities the family does together.

Three parenting styles were identified:

Structured (clear rules but also lots of encouragement, interaction, and communication).

Authoritarian (Rules arbitrarily applied, relatively little encouragement, more punishment, less interaction and communication.)

Laissez Faire (No particular rules and little consistency in response to children's behavior, inconsistency in interaction, level of communication.)

A number of questions in the interview related to parenting style, and families were classified as shown below:

Table 9

PARENTING STYLES OF PLTP FAMILIES

Laissez Faire	Authoritarian	Structured
5	6	26

[Correlation to CPI +0.22; Statistical Significance <0.05*.]

**A statistical significance of <0.05 means the probability that this relationship would occur by chance is less than 5 in 100. A probability of more than 0.05 is considered to be not statistically significant.*

As seen in the table above, most of the families in the interview sample had clear rules for their children consistently applied, gave the children much encouragement, opportunities for interaction with adults and reported lots of communication between parent and child. The laissez faire style parent was the most likely to be rated as below average in parental involvement, the authoritarian style parent the most likely to be rated as average, and the structured style parent the most likely to be rated as high in parental involvement.

EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Other research in parental involvement has shown the educational expectations of parents to be a strongly motivating factor for good school performance. PLTP discussions focused on how important it was for parents to hold high expectations, and to encourage their children. The parent interview therefore questioned parents on their expectations: *"Do you expect your child to finish high school?"* and *"Do you expect your child will go on to get more education beyond high school?"*

On the basis of the responses to these questions, families were ranked as having low, average, or high expectations for their child in regard to future education.

Table 10

EXPECTATIONS FOR FUTURE EDUCATION

Low	Average	High
5	16	16

[Correlation to CPI +0.21; Not Statistically Significant.]

(Note: The statistical probability in this case was <0.07--very close to the <0.05 level of statistical significance.)

The correlation between parental expectations for a child's future education and their parental involvement ranking was quite high even though just below the level of statistical significance.

The reality that children will achieve these expectations is an unknown. Most of the children were still quite young. However, two of the families have older children already in college; another has high school sons both of whom have been offered wrestling scholarships to attend college. All three of these families were headed by parents with little or no formal education, limited English and poverty level incomes.

HOME ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Three variables were looked at under this heading:

LIBRARY USAGE *"Do you or your children get books from the town library?"*

READING TO CHILD *"Does anyone read to your child at home? Who?"*

HOMEWORK *"Does anyone help your child with homework? Who?"*

All of these types of activities have been found to support children's academic achievement and were discussed and promoted in PLTP discussions. The following profile of findings on these variables are shown below:

Table 11

LIBRARY USE BY PLTP FAMILIES

Do Not Use Town Library	Use Town Library
18	19

[Correlation to CPI +0.13; Not Statistically Significant.]

Table 12

WHO READS TO CHILDREN AT HOME

No One	Other Siblings	Parents	Others
3	11	16	7

[Correlation to CPI +0.15; Not Statistically Significant.]

Table 13

WHO HELPS CHILDREN WITH HOMEWORK

No One	Other Siblings	Parents	Others
2	13	19	3

[Correlation to CPI +0.08; Not Statistically Significant.]

None of these variables proved to be statistically significant although reading to children at home had the highest correlation to the parental involvement ranking, and the families with the highest CPI ranking were those in which the parents read to the children (as opposed to siblings or "others").

Obviously, the relatively low level of literacy among PLTP families, in either Spanish or English, proved a limiting factor. PLTP sessions demonstrated to families the use of wordless books and the trainer reported that the enthusiasm for these was very high. It is clear that siblings play a much more significant educational role in families from linguistic minorities; Parent Leadership Training may need to find a way to include siblings.

PARTICIPATION IN PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

As noted earlier, families who had participated in Parent Leadership Training were classified as "inactive" if they only attended one or two meetings. They were classified as "active" if they attended more meetings and were reported by the trainer as taking a more active part in discussions, or doing the home learning activities, or initiating contact with the school in some way during the period of attendance in PLTP. It was hoped that those who had been active would subsequently show a higher level of parental involvement than those who had minimal involvement with PLTP. This did not turn out to be the case as shown in the table below:

Table 14

FAMILY'S LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Inactive	Active
11	26

[Correlation to CPI -0.04; Not Statistically Significant.]

As indicated, the relationship between PLTP and the CPI ranking was negative, extremely low, and not statistically significant. The "inactive" and "active" families were almost identically distributed between the three classifications on the CPI, as shown in the following distribution:

Table 15

PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS IN EACH RATING OF CPI BY INVOLVEMENT IN PLTP

CPI ranking:	Below Average	Average	Above Average	
Inactive in PLTP	18%	36%	46%	N=11
Active in PLTP	23%	35%	42%	N=26

Nor was the classification as "active" or "inactive" in PLTP significantly correlated to any of the other variables, with the exception of whether the mother could drive--if she could drive she was more likely to be active in PLTP.

This finding seems to be best explained by the fact that the changes in program design significantly reduced the differences between parents who were classified "inactive" and "active". Originally, the program had planned to serve preschool parents who would be enrolled in 14 training sessions altogether over the course of a year: four in the winter, four more in the spring, and then six after their children entered kindergarten. Three-fourths of 14 sessions would have meant that an "active" parents would have attended 10 or more training meetings. Instead of this design, the program ran each set of training sessions more or less independently, often targeted at entirely different parents. Out of the 259 parents enrolled in PLTP over the period of evaluation, only 15 were enrolled in more than one series of training meetings and the highest number of training meetings attended by any parent was nine.

Since most training series were five or six sessions long, attendance at three-fourths of the sessions for which they were enrolled (part of the definition for "active" participants) meant attendance at three or four meetings. Based solely on the difference in attendance, a person would be considered "inactive" who attended one or two meetings, and "active" if they attended three or more. It would be surprising in such circumstances to find a discernible difference based on the "active"/"inactive" classification, and, in fact, this factor proved to be far less important in determining level of parental involvement than several other factors identified above.

The table below gives the actual attendance at PLTP sessions by parents over the three year period in the evaluation:

Table 16

SUMMARY OF ATTENDANCE IN PLTP BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Number of Meetings Attended by Parents at Each Site

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Sunnyside 5 sessions Fall '87) 6 sessions Spr '88)	42	22	4	2	5	0	0	0	0	75
Mabton 4 sessions Sum '88) 5 sessions Fall '88)	14	10	6	4	3	0	0	0	0	37
Wapato 4 sessions Sum '88) 6 sessions Fall '88) 5 sessions Sum '89)	27	12	8	2	5	4	0	0	1	59
Toppenish 4 sessions Spr '89) (Spec. Ed. only) 6 sessions Spr '89) 6 sessions Fall '89	54	19	2	8	1	2	1	1	0	88
All Sites Combined	137	63	20	16	14	6	1	1	1	259

Attending 1 or 2 meetings = 200 (77%) Attending 3 or more = 59 (23%)

The attendance figures in Table 16 do not include the times in which the PLTP trainer went to ESL (English as a second language) classes and presented some of the PLTP training materials to meet the "civics" requirement the Immigration Service wanted included in ESL training for persons seeking permanent work status in the U.S. No attendance was taken at these meetings. The parents attending represented a captive audience, there for another purpose. In addition, the time involved was limited to three hours overall (during an ESL course), and the material covered was only a small part of the training package for PLTP. For all of these reasons, the evaluator did not feel that it should be included as representative of PLTP training. Had the attendance in the sessions been included, the total attendance would have been nearly doubled.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation question raised was:

What are the factors which influence parental involvement in this population group?

The factors which proved to be significantly correlated to level of parental involvement in this largely Hispanic population group are (in order of significance):

	Correlation to CPI
The years of education by the mother	+0.39 <0.01
Whether the mother can drive a car	+0.35 <0.01
Country in which educated; father	+0.33 <0.01
Both parents ability to communicate speak, read, write in English	+0.32 <0.01
Years the family has lived in area	+0.32 <0.01
Parenting style of family	+0.22 <0.05

The factors very close to being statistically significant:

Country in which educated: mother	+0.18 <0.07
Educational expectations for child	+0.18 <0.07

The other evaluation question was:

"What evidence is there that Parent Leadership Training has influenced parental involvement observed?"

There was no significant correlation between those considered "active" and "inactive" in Parent Leadership Training and their CPI ranking.. However, the program, as implemented, rendered the distinction between "active" and "inactive" as so slight as to be virtually meaningless. Apparently, an intervention for as short a period of time as was the case in this instance is able to create positive changes in types or parental involvement, but not enough to produce a statistically significant difference. A longer intervention or a series of training sessions might have produced a different result. There were many specific examples given by parents in home interviews of actions they had taken based on information learned in the Parent Leadership Training. And the comments on the training were generally supportive of its value to them.

PART TWO

THE REPLICATION PHASE OF PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

Citizens Education Center interest in developing the parent leadership training program was not only for the service it would provide at any given site, but in the hope of developing a model that could be used for the benefit of school districts across the state. This is in keeping with its role as a statewide agency. The funding agencies which supported the program were also interested in it because of possible expansion to other school districts. The evaluator felt this aspect of the program was so important that the original evaluation planned for the pilot programs in the Yakima Valley was expanded to include evaluation of the effectiveness of the program at replication sites.

The first year of the replication phase was carried out in the school year 1989-90. Using the materials and experience gained from the pilot phase of the program in the Yakima Valley, Citizens Education Center (CEC) sent out invitations to school districts across the state inviting districts to apply for inclusion in the first year replication. Applicant districts had to agree to send a team to the training, the membership of which was to include an administrator, a teacher, a parent, and someone from a local community agency. The district had to pay the team members expenses and travel to the training (3 trips, and 5 training days for four people) and a $500 fee to cover CEC costs during the sessions--space, materials, lunches and snacks that were provided.

Twelve teams were selected (more than this applied) and came to the fall training. The evaluator considers this an astonishing first start for dissemination of a project compared to the experience of the National Diffusion Network (a Department of Education program to encourage "proven" projects to extend technical assistance to other school districts wanting to adopt/adapt their program to the local site). The experience of the NDN is that it takes a great deal of effort to get school districts

interested in adopting new practices; the experience of most programs chosen as "model" programs is that the first year brings them only one adoption, and that it builds up from there.

CEC started out with 12 adoptions for parent leadership training it's first year (selected from a larger field of districts which had applied for the program). Most of the replication sites did bring a full team to the initial training; some did not. It became clear as the replication sites developed their programs that those with a full team had an immense advantage over those who did not have this broad a base of support. Those with less broadly based support had less success with the program and were much more likely to drop out. (By dropping out, I mean discontinuing the program after one series in the fall, gradually losing contact with CEC and failing to send in evaluation reports, and not returning for additional training.)

The replication sites were very diverse in the characteristics of the families served by each program. This diversity is shown in the table presented below:

Table 17

CHARACTERISTICS OF REPLICATION SITES SELECTED

LOCALITY	6 Urban	4 Rural	2 In Suburbs	
MINORITY PERCENTAGE	3 (1-12%)	2 (36-40%)	4 (60-79%)	3 (100%)*
POVERTY PERCENTAGE	3 (20-30%)	3 (40-54%)	3 (64-85%)	3 (100%)*
LIMITED ENGLISH	4 (0-3%)	2 (20-18%)	3 (56-65%)	3 (90=100%)*

**Those with 100% minority reported were programs targeted exclusively for a migrant or immigrant population within a district, and do not reflect total district student body characteristics.*

EVALUATION OF THE FIRST YEAR REPLICATION

Replication sites voluntarily kept records on attendance, did evaluations locally to determine relative satisfaction with the program, and filled out detailed questionnaires submitted by the evaluator in which they described program

characteristics in their implementation. Three measures of success came in from most sites enabling the evaluator to create a rank ordering of programs according to these indices.

The indices of program effectiveness were as follows:

THE COVERAGE INDEX (How Many People Are We Reaching?)

This was the total number of parents participating in the training series, as a percentage of the student enrollment from which parents were invited. The range or scores for programs that reported these records was as follows:

Low: 5 (5-8%) Medium 6 (11-16%) High 3 (39-44%)

THE SUSTAINED INTEREST INDEX (Are People Coming Back?)

This represented actual attendance as a percentage of "possible" attendance (possible attendance was the total number of individuals who had attended, times the number of sessions held). The range of scores for programs reporting data was:

Low: 4 (38-40%) Medium: 5 (43-47%) High: 4 (59-71%)

TEAM SATISFACTION INDEX

(Self report on how well meetings went).

CEC asked each site to submit a summary of information for each training meeting. This included a self-rating in which teams were asked to use a scale of 1 to 5 (very disappointed to very pleased) on six aspects of each program:

Attendance
Representation in Those Attending
Participation Level
Content of the Sessions
Child Care
Overall Reaction

The index score was created by taking the sum of the actual ratings for all meetings held, as a percentage of the possible maximum score. (This would be 30 points for each meeting, times the number of meetings.)

The range of team satisfaction ratings was from 77% to 98%.

USE OF IMPLEMENTATION DATA

Some programs reached a high percentage of parents but did not keep them coming back; others reached a small number but kept consistent attendance. The programs were therefore high on one scale and low on another. The evaluator assigned points for each scale, and using a composite score derived from all three scales designated 3 programs as highly effective, 4 as medium effective, and 3 as low in effectiveness. The effectiveness rating was applied only to programs which had provided detail on their program implementation, since the purpose was to relate different program characteristics to these ratings of program effectiveness to see what patterns would emerge. If certain program characteristics were consistently associated with more effective programs and absent in less effective programs, it provides guidance as to the type of program characteristics that will lead to "successful" parent leadership training programs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAMS BY RANKING OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

All of the programs reported using the most common public school methods of advertising events: 1) notices sent home with children; 2) posters; and 3) information published in the school newsletter. The following shows the additional recruitment tools used by districts, grouped according to their program effectiveness rating:

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING = High (3 programs)

All three programs preregistered families.

In all three, invitations were sent home describing the program (translated into home language as needed) asking parents to return the form indicating if they were coming, number and age of children they would be bringing for child care. In two of the programs, parents were also asked if they would need transportation. Follow-up telephone calls were then made to confirm the registration. The sites that offered transportation also worked out arrangements for staff to pick people up (later supplemented by helping arrange car pools by using maps showing where people lived, with phone numbers for contacting each other). Two of these sites had targeted their program especially for the non-English speaking parents, and these sites also made phone calls to any parent that had not responded to the first invitation. Follow-up calls were made before every meeting in the series.

All of the sites that used preregistration said that not all who registered subsequently came, but it helped in arranging facilities and planning for child care. All sites with preregistration also welcomed any parent who came without prior registration, and allowed them to register at the meetings.

In addition to preregistration, the "extra" recruitment efforts made by one or the other of these three programs included:

The teachers telling the children on the day of the meeting that they would be seeing them later (or they would miss them) if the parent had indicated they would come and bring children. This helped to insure that the children reminded the parents about the meeting.

Sent out printed information to all teachers and instructional assistants about what had happened at the first meeting, and what was planned for the next one (done after each meeting). The teachers then had this information to pass on to parents. An abbreviated sample is shown below:

"Our first night (date) of the parent group was a good one.

We had ____ parents attend!

Parents...

--located where they live in Seattle and where they came from on large maps [note program had immigrant parents]
--watched a video showing their kids in action and depicting life in an American school
. . . .
--talked about cultural practices of telling stories or reading at home
--were given a FREE wordless book to try in class and to try at home

IN THE NEXT CLASS

Parents...

--will learn about who works in the schools
--will learn about school and community library resources and apply for a library card
--will learn about activities they can do with their children after reading or telling a story.

TEACHERS
Thank you again for giving us input on topic areas you think are important to the families. In the first session parents were very interested in school attendance expectations!..."

In one program, the team leader made presentations about PLTP to the PTA, at Staff meetings and at kindergarten orientation meetings to make sure all staff knew about the program so they could answer questions if parents asked, and do informal recruiting for the program.

All three programs made phone calls between meetings to follow-up on any who had not come, and to remind them of the next meeting. (One program said follow-up calls were somewhat inconsistent.)

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING = MEDIUM (4 programs)

Of these four programs, three of the four had parents preregister for the meetings. This was done by asking the parents to send the notices back with the children. (To encourage better response, one program gave incentives to the classes

in which the most were returned.) Two had children personalize the notices that went home. One had a registration table at the school open house, and made a presentation about the meeting at the open house calling attention to the registration table. One called parents after the first meeting who had registered but not come to invite them again. This program also called parents after the second meeting who had come to the first but not come back. The other three programs reported they had done no follow-up.

The other program did not preregister; just sent out general announcements expecting people to come if they were interested.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING = LOW (3 programs)

One of these programs asked parents to return part of the notice indicating if they would attend. However, almost none did return the notices, and no personal calling was done to solicit attendance. Teachers were also asked to invite parents they met at other functions.

In the other two programs, attendance was on a come if you can basis with no attempt at preregistration. When parents did come, one program attempted to get them to come back by promising to video tape their children in school to show at the next meeting. It also asked for parent volunteers to bring refreshments to future meetings.

None of the three programs did any personal calling. None reported any planned follow-up contacts as the series progressed. None reported any type of recruitment beyond the notices home with kids, posters, and only two of the programs publicized the program through the school newsletter.

To summarize the information on Recruitment Strategies:

Table 18

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES BY EFFECTIVENESS RANKING

HIGH - 3/3 asked parents to preregister.
3/3 used personal phone calls or home visits.
3/3 had follow-up plan.
3/3 made sure teachers/others/were fully aware of PLTP so they could promote attendance.
2/3 targeted certain parents within the school and focused personalized recruiting on these families.

MEDIUM - 3/4 asked parents to preregister.
2/3 did some calling for confirmation or follow-up.
2/4 used "extra" solicitation (beyond notices/posters/ and newsletter) to publicize meeting.

LOW - 1/3 asked parents to preregister.
0/3 used personal contacts or phone calls except on casual basis for parents they happened to see.
0/3 had a follow-up plan for contacting parents during series.

All sites used notices sent with children / posters / newsletter, so only the use of additional strategies has been reported above.
*All sites that asked parents to register in advance also welcomed parents who came without notice and these registered at the meeting.

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING = HIGH (3 programs)

All three reported the child care was very satisfactory. One noted it was a "positive recruitment tool"--the children enjoyed themselves so much they wanted to come back. One program paid its providers, one used volunteers (including older students), and one provided no information on whether it was paid or not. One program that recruited primarily linguistic minority families recruited paid help representing the same linguistic diversity--they felt this was important for parents to

feel comfortable leaving their children in someone else's care. Two of the three reported doing much advanced planning of appropriate child care activities.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING = MEDIUM (4 programs)

Three of the four reported their child care arrangements were excellent; and gave many details on advance planning done for child care activities. One entrusted child care to another agency and reported they had problems which upset some parents and kept them from coming back. One noted that while child care was excellent, many parents left children at home if they could because of the hours. (This program lasted until 9:00 P.M., whereas most programs were over by 8:30 P.M.)

Two used paid child care workers, one used volunteers, and the fourth had child care provided by a community agency.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING = LOW (3 programs)

Two of these three programs reported they were disappointed in their child care arrangements. The other program felt theirs was highly satisfactory. Since all three sites operated on a "come if you can" basis, advance planning related to numbers of children would have been impossible. None of the sites, in their description of program elements, make any mention of advance preparation of child care activities.

Information on child care arrangements is summarized below:

Table 19

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS BY EFFECTIVENESS RATING

HIGH - 3/3 very pleased with child care arrangements.
3/3 had preregistration to facilitate planning.
2/3 reported extensive planning of child activities.
1 used volunteers; 1 paid helpers; 1 no information on pay.

MEDIUM - 3/4 very pleased with child care arrangements, reported detailed advance planning.
1/4 not pleased; reported problems with child care kept some parents from returning, this program entrusted child care to another agency.
1 used volunteers; 2 paid helpers; 1 no information on pay.

LOW - 2/3 disappointed in child care.
1/3 very pleased.
0/3 had advance information on numbers of children to expect, and none reported advance planning of children's activities.
1 used volunteers; 1 paid, 1 provided by community agency.

TRANSPORTATION, LOCATION AND SCHEDULE

All sites met at the school building, so this item is not separately reported.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = HIGH (3 programs)

Two of the three provided transportation or helped parents with travel arrangements. The third did not provide transportation.

One indicated distances from the school was a problem because the children were bussed in from all over the city and the parents were similarly dispersed. This site indicated that providing transportation would be a high priority in future years.

Two of the three met from 7:00-8:30 P.M. on a week night, for four consecutive weeks. The third met on one Tuesday and two Fridays (and indicated they would plan

for weeknights next time). This one did not indicate the hours nor whether the meetings were in consecutive weeks.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = MEDIUM (4 programs)

All four reported that transportation was not provided. Two indicated that if they knew it was needed, they would attempt to provide, but did not advertise it. (One person was picked up at one of these sites.)

All four sites met at different times: 7:00-8:45 P.M., 7:00-9:00 P.M., 6:30-8:30 P.M., and the fourth did not state the time. None reported difficulty with the time except that the child care workers reported parents kept children at home for the program that met until nine because of bedtimes.

Three of the programs met on consecutive weeks. Two were pleased with this schedule and one planned to try alternate weeks another time. The fourth site had meetings at irregular times (skipped a week and changed dates) and felt this decreased attendance.

All used school buildings for meetings; two regreted choosing the gym, because it was not a warm, friendly meeting space, and in their next training series, both reported they had moved the meetings to the library.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = LOW (3 programs)

None provided transportation.

Two met 7:00-8:30 P.M., one met 7:00-9:00 P.M. Two met on consecutive weeks and all were pleased with schedule. One met on widely separated random dates over a three month period. This site felt the schedule was unsatisfactory.

All met at the school buildings: one noted that the school name had been changed without notifying parents which caused some confusion; also that there were no outside lights at the school.

A summary of these "convenience" factors: transportation, schedule and location is shown below:

Table 20

TRANSPORTATION, SCHEDULE AND LOCATION BY EFFECTIVENESS RANKING

HIGH - 2/3 provided transportation to many parents, helped others use public transport or car pools.
2/3 met 7:00-8:30 P.M. on four consecutive weeks and were pleased with this schedule.
1 gave no information on hours of meetings, but felt their schedule which had meetings on different days in different weeks was confusing for participants. They also held some meetings on Friday, which proved to be a bad day.

MEDIUM - 4/4 provide no transportation.
2/4 were pleased with schedule, consecutive weeks 6:30-8:30 P.M. and 7:00-8:45 P.M.
2/4 were dissatisfied with schedule; one felt every other week would be better, the other because inconsistent schedule did not work (skipping weeks, changing day of week).

LOW - 3/3 provided no transportation.
2/3 were pleased with consecutive weeks schedule.
1/3 held meetings on widely separated dates which they felt was a mistake.
1 reported problem with location, no outside lights.

SOCIALIZATION AND REFRESHMENTS

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING = HIGH (3 programs)

All three of these programs placed more emphasis on socialization than programs in the other effectiveness categories. Two started the meetings with about a

15 minute period for socialization. Two ended their training series with a potluck evening that was at least 50% socialization (and to which extended family were invited, resulting in a huge turnout which both reported as very successful). All three had seating arrangements in small groups which added a social dimension as people got better acquainted and exchanged personal experiences.

All three used deliberate planning to help people get acquainted. One tried assigning people to different small groups so they met more people. The others had small groups based on language use. (Most presentations were made through simultaneous presentation in different languages.)

All three used time for introductions telling about families. One indicated that to put the presenters on a comfortable basis with families, they brought pictures of their families and shared these. One which drew families from a wide area had families locate where they lived on a large map. The programs reported other icebreakers.

One of these programs did not serve refreshments at meetings. (They indicated most of the parents attending did not drink tea or coffee and would not eat American cookies.) This program was one of the two which held a potluck in which families shared "native" foods--this was highly satisfactory.

All programs were asked to indicate what percentage of time was used for various purposes at meetings. These three programs consistently had the greatest amount of time allocated to socialization, from 20 to 30 minutes and a whole hour on the night of the potluck.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = MEDIUM (4 programs)

One program indicated that none of their time was allocated to socialization (although refreshments were served).

Another program reported there was "not enough time for socializing" although they did allocate a little time for breaks and refreshments, and team members tried to facilitate discussion and encourage conversation during meeting times.

Another program allocated about ten minutes for socializing before the meeting and at breaktime, and they worked at mixing people up to encourage conversation through seating arrangements. This program reported that people stayed late at every meeting--presumably resulting in some additional socializing.

The other program indicated that most socializing took place before and after the meeting, plus about ten minutes at the meeting allowed for refreshments and break.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = LOW (3 programs)

One program indicated their attendance was so small (less than ten people per meeting) that the entire meeting was informal and no time was needed for additional socializing.

Another program reported that "refreshments were offered, but time for socializing was extremely limited."

The third program indicated they spent about 5% of total time for socializing over the break for refreshments. This program met in an auditorium, which did not lend itself to conversational seating.

Program practices in regards to refreshments and socialization is summarized on the table below:

Table 21

PRACTICES REGARDING SOCIALIZATION AND REFRESHMENTS
BY EFFECTIVENESS RANKING

HIGH -	3/3 programs stressed time for socialization in planning their programs. 3/3 used conversational seating arrangements in small groups. 2/3 held a potluck for extended family members with very large turnouts. 2/3 mentioned need for refreshments that were suitable to multiethnic backgrounds of parents.
MEDIUM -	1/4 reported no time allocated to socializing. 1/4 reported there was "not enough time" for socializing in meetings (most took place outside of meeting time). 3/4 concentrated socializing time into the refreshment break.
LOW -	1/3 reported time was not needed for socializing because of informality of meetings and small members in attendance. 2/3 concentrated socializing time into short refreshment break.

PROGRAM PRACTICES REGARDING THINGS TO TAKE HOME

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = HIGH (3 programs)

All three programs had wordless books which were given to parents to take home and spent one or more meetings on ways to use wordless books. In one of these programs, the wordless books were ones that had been made by the children. In the other two programs, they were purchased.

One of the programs had door prizes. All three had "hand-outs" about various activities children could do at home. One had flyers from the public library, and helped parents acquire a library card if they didn't already have one. All distributed some hand-outs relating to topics that were discussed.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = MEDIUM (4 programs)

Two of the four programs had door prizes as an incentive for attendance. One program also had various small gifts and coupons donated by local merchants as gifts for parents. One reported they gave prizes to those who completed the home learning activities. Two gave parents a wordless book. All four distributed handouts relating to topics being discussed, or describing home learning activities that could be done with children. One had literature contributed by the public library. One sent home a glossary of terms that are used in public schools which parents might find unfamiliar.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = LOW (3 programs)

One reported they had very few handouts because they didn't have a budget for copying materials. None used door prizes. One gave parents folders to keep

handouts in. One had wordless books for parents, but asked parents to check them out and return them to the school.

The following table summarizes practices relating to things to take home which were given out at parent leadership training meetings:

Table 22

"TAKE HOME" PRACTICES BY EFFECTIVENESS RANKING

HIGH - 3/3 gave parents wordless books to take home (in one program these books were made by the children, in the others purchased).
1/3 gave away door prizes.
3/3 gave duplicated materials relating to topics discussed.
1/3 had flyers from the public library, and helped parents acquire a library card.

MEDIUM - 2/4 gave parents a wordless book.
2/4 gave away door prizes; one also had other small donated items to give away.
1/4 gave prizes for completing home learning activities.
4/4 gave out duplicated materials related to discussion topics, or describing home learning activities for children. One handout was a glossary of school terms.
1/4 had flyers from the public library.

LOW - None gave away door prizes.
3/3 gave some handouts related to topics of discussion, although one said this was very limited because of lack of budget for duplicating.
1/3 let parents check out and return wordless books.

GIVING RECOGNITION TO THOSE WHO ATTENDED (INCLUDING PRESENTERS)

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = HIGH (3 programs)

In one program, the principal sent thank you notes to each family that participated; he also thanked the parent coordinator. Thank you notes went to each

volunteer that helped, and the child care volunteers (including older students) were each given a certificate and a gift. The parents gave corsages and certificates of appreciation to the team of people who provided the training.

One program reported they gave recognition and reinforcement to those who carried out reading activities at home.

The third program posted names and addresses of parents who attended (this was also distributed to parents in the hope of encouraging friendships among participants). The team sent a handwritten thank you note to all the parents who attended. At the end of the training, parents were given certificates.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = MEDIUM (4 programs)

One program reported they posted names of participants and gave certificates to parents. They indicated that no thank you letters were sent.

Another program sent thank you letters to everyone that worked. They gave further recognition through articles, which included many names, which were published in both the PTA newsletter and in a special "bulletin" the program published after each meeting. The parents made donations in appreciation of the child care volunteers--which was in turn donated to the school for books for the parent library.

The third program posted and announced names. It sent thank you letters to those who presented as special guests, and to the custodial help.

The fourth program supplied no information to the evaluator on any type of recognition or thanks yous to participants or program providers.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = LOW (3 programs)

One held a luncheon to express appreciation to child care providers and presenters. Thank you letters were sent to the parents who took part in the program evaluation.

One gave recognition at meetings to parents who completed home learning activities and gave certificates for those who attended all sessions.

One program provided no information on any type of recognition activities.

To summarize program practices in regard to giving recognition to parents or those helping with the program in some way:

Table 23

RECOGNITION PRACTICES BY EFFECTIVENESS RANKING

HIGH - 2/3 sent thank you note to parents.
1/3 posted names or participants at school.
1/3 gave certificates at end of training series.
1/3 gave certificates and gift to child care volunteers.
1/3 reported sending thank you notes to all volunteers.
1/3 reported parents presented gifts to trainers.

MEDIUM - 1/4 had news articles to give participants recognition.
2/4 posted names of participants.
1/4 gave certificates to parents.
1/4 reported parents gave money in appreciation of child care (which was in turn donated for books).
1/4 reported sending thank you notes to all who worked.
1/4 gave no information on recognition practices.

LOW - 1/3 gave luncheon to recognize volunteers.
1/3 sent thank you letters to parents who participated in program evaluation.
1/3 gave recognition to parents who did home activities.
1/3 gave certificates for those attending whole series.
1/3 gave no information on recognition practices.

CONTENT AND CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

The workbook prepared by Citizen's Education Center for the first year replication sites suggested four topics for parent leadership training, as follows:

1. What is Public Education/Parents Rights and Responsibilities?
2. Who Works for the Public Schools?
3. Parent/Teacher Conferencing.
4. Problem Solving Together.

In addition, each meeting night was to include home learning activities, and CEC strongly recommended use of wordless books for at least one meeting.

EFFECTIVENESS RATING = HIGH (3 programs)

For the evaluation, each program site was asked to indicate how their time was allocated at each meeting between:

Presentations (audience primarily listening)

Questions to speaker (one person at a time speaking while whole audience listened)

Small group discussions (simultaneous sessions with many people talking)

Informal time for socialization (many people talking)

The striking characteristics of the three programs ranked as "most effective" was that they allocated the least time for "presentations--audience listening" (ranking 6th, 7th, and 8th--among 8 sites--two programs were not ranked because of missing data). The time allocation for presentations (averaged over all sessions) amount to 25%, 30% and 37%. On the other hand, they allocated the most time for socialization (ranking 1st, 2nd, and 3rd with time allocations of 32%, 28% and 13%). They were

among the highest in time allocated to small group discussion--many people talking; (ranking 1st, 2nd, and 5th), with time allocations of 42%, 40% and 25%.

Two of the three were programs targeted on non-English speaking parents (a subgroup within the school; in one case a subgroup drawn from two schools), and the third was a program that drew from a total school population.

The "general population" program included in this group used all four topics in the suggested order. However, it circulated a questionnaire to parents at the first meeting to find out both their interests--things they would like to know; and their concerns--things they'd like to change about the school. They adapted the topics from the second meeting on to incorporate parental requests.

From evaluations from parents at different sites which asked them which of the programs had interested them the most, "Who Works for the Public Schools" was usually less liked than some other topics. At this site, however, they reported:

> *"We played games with 'Who Works at the School' and parents liked it. The parents had asked for that information in our survey, so they felt like we were answering their questions."*

This site also reported that the principal set the tone for the meetings when he shared with the group about having a child with academic difficulties. The meetings then took on some of the qualities of a support group with very open sharing of personal experiences and thoughts. The parents were seated in conversational groupings (even during whole group presentations), and the large amount of time (42%--highest of any site) spent in small group discussions lent itself to such personal sharing, as did the time devoted to informal conversation and socializing.

The second site in this group took up only the first two topics, much modified--particularly as to the suggested time frame, because time had to be allowed for translation. Initial presentations were then followed by simultaneous translation in four languages, with the ESL teacher helping to communicate with a fifth group of parents who spoke languages for which there was no translator available. This program

estimated that parents had to spend about 30% of their time listening to a language they did not understand, while waiting for translation. It also inhibited parents from asking questions in the large group (which would have to go through multiple translations) preferring to wait and ask their question in private or in the small group within which there was communication in their native language.

This program made much use of video to demonstrate, rather than explain, how things were done in the public schools.

This site also felt their sessions took on some of the characteristics of a support group. It had a social dimension for these parents that appeared to be appreciated. A sort of "bonding" occurred because:

> *"The parents were able to see the affection we show their children--via video. Also, we talked about our own roles as parents and actually had photos of our families to share with parents."*

This site reported the second highest amount of time spent in small group discussion. In a multilingual parents group, the small group provided the most comfortable format because within the small group use of native language communication did not require further translation.

The third program in this group also involved a multilingual group of parents, in this case drawn from two schools. This program also grouped parents with an instructional aide who could speak their language (Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Russian). They reduced the time parents spent waiting for translation as the meetings progressed by having the instructional aides do more and more of the presentations within each subgroup (instead of having a presentation in English to the whole group followed by translation in the subgroups). This site reported that as the meetings progressed, the multilingual instructional aides became more confident of presenting information themselves, and answering questions without referring to the teacher or some other presenter.

The topics followed the general outline provided by CEC, but with much adaptation and additions. The first topic on "What is Public Education?" embraced cultural differences in public education here and where these families came from--with sharing of personal experiences. For this group of parents, it was a very high interest topic, although at other sites serving few minorities from others countries, it was frequently considered the least interesting.

The team at this site solicited from teachers ideas on things they especially wanted communicated to parents. These "local" topics included discussion of expectations regarding school attendance (in the context of "What is Public Education?"). Teachers were also anxious for parents to know some of the means they used to help children learn English, and voluntarily prepared some videos to be shown at the meetings demonstrating different techniques. The home learning activity practice time for that session gave parents an opportunity to work with some of these materials used in ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction.

An added topic of high interest to this group dealt with learning how to access community services--at one meeting the public library was the focus, with a display of multiethnic books in many languages. This meeting helped parents locate their house on a map, and the regional library nearest them, and helped many parents fill out the forms to obtain a library card. At another meeting, the discussion was on recreational programs available for kids over the summertime.

In summary, all three of these programs found a way to adapt the topics to interests of the particular group of parents they served. And all three conducted the programs in a way that maximized parental participation. By participating in the sharing as parents first (and trainers/teachers/presenters second), they achieved a high comfort level within the group, and an openness in communication and sharing.

EFFECTIVENESS RANKING = MEDIUM (4 programs)

One of the sites in this grouping did not submit information on content and conduct of the meetings, so there are really only three programs in this grouping from which to draw information.

One of these sites used a unique set of topics, which combined the CEC topics "1" and "2" into a single night, and on another night used the material on parent conferences, combined with their own materials on learning styles. They added sessions on communicating with children, and on having fun with music. They also added sessions on reading and writing with children and on positive discipline. The coordinator at this site explained:

> *"In adult education, I feel the more actively you involve parents in the sessions, the greater success you'll enjoy. The selection of topics is important. In planning for the spring training series, we surveyed our parents on topic selection."*

[Note: In planning Spring sessions, they teamed with another PLTP site in which there was much concern about the transition from elementary to junior high, and surveyed not only parents, but students. They derived a very long list of concerns from both groups. Both these sites had held meetings in former years to inform parents and students about junior high, and there was very poor attendance. This time the survey evidently changed parents' attitudes, leading them to expect they might get answers to their very real concerns and the attendance exceeded anybody's expectation.]

This site used assigned seating (based on such criteria as children's grade level, first letter of last name, etc.), which was different each time. They also used ice breakers and structured social time in an effort to help people get acquainted. They felt this resulted in a growing sense of relationship and more open sharing as the series progressed.

The other two sites used the topics suggested by Citizen's Education Center, in that order. They reported that parents felt topics "3" and "4" (Conferences, and Problem Solving) were more relevant, and more interesting because they spurred conversation on personal experiences.

Both programs felt there was some "bonding" between trainers and participants. One indicated that the sharing did not become as personal and open until the last meeting, by which time people had begun to recognize one another and have similar experiences to share.

EFFECTIVENESS RANKING = LOW (3 programs)

One of the programs in this category felt that their sessions were so informal, and the group of parents so small (always less than ten) that there was no real distinction between small group discussion, presentation and questions--everything was small group discussion. This site was, therefore, not included in the analysis of time allocation.

The other two sites in this category were the two programs which allocated the most time for "Presentations--Audience Listening". Among sites, they ranked 1st and 2nd in this category, using respectively 60% and 48% of the meeting time for presentation. These two sites allocated the least time to socializing, ranking 7th and 8th with allocated time of 5% and 0%.

One site had a program targeted to a subgroup within the school; in this case, parents of special education students. This program used the topics in the order suggested by CEC. But the program on "Who Works for the Public Schools" focused more on the special services offered by the school. This topic was reported to have quite a bit of interest to parents with children in special education. They had some videos showing specialists doing speech therapy, which parents found very interesting. The program on parent conferences was adapted to the planning for a student's individual educational plan (IEP)--which is legally required to have the approval of both parent and school.

Another site combined the topics of "What is Public Education and Who Works for the Schools?" and they reported this session was very well liked. Their session on parent conferences was not well liked--the presenters felt this was because nearly every parent at this school attends parent conferences and they felt the information was not new.

They added sessions on learning styles and self esteem, which they indicated were very popular. Their last session was on planning and evaluation.

This site also reported that in their meetings:

> *"Sharing was very open. We want to continue building a support group. (This openness) was brought about because the presenters shared openly with the group their personal experiences."*

The last site in this group used the topics in the order suggested. They reported that the sessions on conferences and problem solving were of the greatest interest to parents who were looking for a new perspective on areas of concern. The planning team felt the first two topics constituted public information parents could get somewhere else.

This group also reported that school personnel presented themselves as being parents with children, rather than school officials, and that information was personalized and kept informal. Parents seemed to feel the sessions were comfortable and there were many positive comments.

Thus, although these programs have been ranked as having different degrees of effectiveness for evaluation of different strategies and program elements, locally they were all successful programs much appreciated by the parents who took part.

A summary of program differences regarding the content and conduct of meetings is shown in the table below:

Table 24

CONTENT AND CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

BY EFFECTIVENESS RANKING

HIGH - 3/3 allocated less time than other sites to presentations; during which parents were primarily listeners.
3/3 allocated more than other sites to small group discussion and socialization; during which many people were talking.
3/3 found out what was important to local parents or teachers and made adaptations of topics to these interests.
3/3 developed elements of a support group with open sharing and bonding between participants.

MEDIUM - (One program provided no information on this topic and is not reported.)

1/3 made many changes and adaptations of topics suggested by CEC; felt it was important that topics relate to parents' real concerns.
2/3 followed the topic and schedule suggested.
3/3 felt sharing between parents was very open, and a sense of bonding increased in later sessions as parents became better acquainted.

LOW - 2/3 sites used all four topics suggested, with one of these making adaptations to the concerns of the targeted group of parents.
1/3 used only three of the topics, combined two of them and added two of their own.
3/3 felt there was very open sharing of personal experiences within the meetings, facilitated by staff being open and personal as they shared with parents.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS

COSTS First year replication sites were asked: *"Do you feel that the cost of this program would make it sustainable in future years (cash and the energy required to do things through volunteers)?"*

Eight programs responded to this question. All said, "Yes, they thought the program could and would continue." However, most felt that some funding was

needed. A few programs had grant funds to apply. Some did fundraising within the community (asking businesses, organizations, PTA, etc.) to help. A few seemed to enjoy the success they had achieved in winning this type of support--others felt the time and talents for getting donations was too much on top of the effort by volunteers needed to present the programs and provide the support functions. (One program published the names of all who had volunteered some form of support in a newsletter they put out after each meeting; as a rule, this list had fifty to seventy names on it.)

Two sites mentioned that union contracts specified that extra hour responsibility by classroom staff must be compensated. Since personal calls to parents, providing transportation, providing translation at meetings, and making presentations in many cases could not have been done without extra hours of help from classroom staff, some of the programs could not have functioned at all without financial support. Even with some financial support, every program entailed a large commitment of volunteered time and services, particularly by team members.

OWNERSHIP Each replication site was asked how much responsibility had fallen on various "stakeholders" in the parent program: 1) for initiating the program; and 2) for carrying it out.

(1) The Team
(2) Classroom Teachers
(3) School Administration
(4) Parents
(5) Community People

Site responses to the question about <u>who initiated</u> the program were as follows, in no particular order:

(1) a parent who had been in a parent support and education group before

(2) the school administration and the team

(3) the team, school administration and parents

(4) school administration

(5) school administration and teacher

(6) the team and parents

(7) administration and the team

The dominant mode seems to have been the district administration, with support from the team. (The team, as noted in the introduction, was supposed to consist of one administrator, one teacher, one parent and one representative of a community agency). In three cases, the parents were mentioned as helping initiate the idea.

The responses to the questions about how much help came from each of these groups in carrying it out were, in no particular order, as follows:

(1) The team had major responsibility and some parents helped.

(2) The team 80%, classroom teachers 3%, school administration 3%, parents 14%, community person (was member of the team).

(3) All involved and very supportive.

(4) The team organized and facilitated; teachers assisted in specific tasks when asked; school administration was supportive, parents showed up, community people were part of the team.

(5) Parents (90%), school administration (4%), teacher (4%), community person (2%).

(6) The team (70%), classroom teachers (10%), parents (5%), community people (15% + providing all the child care).

(7) The team gave lots of help, classroom teachers minimal help mostly with recruitment, administration support and child care, parents participation, community donation of incentives.

(8) The team did it. Teachers came at the invitation of the team and were otherwise integrated, some limited support from school administration.

From the above, it appears that most of the burden fell on the assigned team members. School administration is frequently mentioned. The administrative support seems frequently to have been moral support, although it also often related to costs--space, duplicating, sometimes child care. Parents were part of the team, but in most sites parent involvement was largely participatory. Teachers seem to be the most left out. A number of sites were keenly aware of this, and felt it was a deficiency that needed correcting in future years.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation questions addressed in Part Two were as follows:

What success has Citizens' Education Center had in developing the Parent Leadership Training Program into a model that can be transported to other sites?

and

What can be learned from the experience of the first year replication sites on the strategies that lead to effective program implementation with a variety of population groups?

The large number of adoptions made in the first year of replication and the resounding success of these programs in most of the sites in which they were implemented is evidence that the program model is highly adaptable and the training and technical services provided by Citizens' Education Center exemplary.

As to the strategies that lead to effective program implementation, this report has documented that a remarkably diverse set of parent leadership programs were developed at the first year replication sites. All required great energy and commitment. All had in common the openness and sharing between parents and school representatives who presented themselves as parents first and educators second.

Certain strategies of organizing and running these meetings proved more effective than others--in general, the more personal the invitation to parents, the more likely they were to attend; the more actively they participated, the more likely they were to come back; the more sensitive to the particular needs and concerns of the population served, the more likely to achieve a high interest level in the participants.

The programs are still in evolution; support is not yet broad enough among the stakeholders; the need for funding awaits a greater realization by districts of the benefits of such programs so that district budgets incorporate this cost--or the state legislature adds funding if they determine that parental involvement should really be an integral part of "basic education".

PART THREE

DISCUSSION

What insights does this evaluation provide? This discussion will focus on questions about the program that might be important to different audiences.

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS: *What appear to be essential elements in successful implementation of Parent Leadership Training: Does the program result in more participation by minority parents?*

ELEMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The guiding principle to be derived from this evaluation is that effective programs depend on the broadest possible base of support.

(I) There needs to be a team to carry out the program.

Ideally, the team should include one or more parents, administrators, teachers, teacher aides (particularly when they represent language skills not available in certified staff) and home visitors or counselors. A representative from some community group can also be a very important team member--mobilizing financial and volunteer resources for the program and the school.

The importance of the team is partly because the tasks of carrying out the program are too diverse and too time consuming to be feasible for one person. Sometimes districts feel that hiring a "parent coordinator" either full or part-time is the best way to make use of whatever limited amount of money they have to spend for parental involvement programs. The danger in this is that assigning one person a title such as "parent program coordinator" may cause others to put too much of the responsibility on that one person. This is particularly likely to happen if the "parent coordinator" is paid and all others are working as volunteers.

If the district has some limited funds to use to support parent leadership training, it would be far better used for extra duty pay for a number of people. These might include outreach staff such as home visitors and bus drivers, to take on more personalized recruiting and provide transportation, if needed. It might include bilingual staff to be available at meetings for presentations in languages other than English (and to translate all invitations, publicity, etc.) relating to the meetings. It might include teachers to prepare appropriate materials to give parents to help them understand the school work their child is doing and be shown ways they can help their child. It might be used to pay substitutes to allow team members time for planning, or time off to compensate for evening hours they need to spend in parent meetings.

A parent involvement budget would be well used to compensate teachers aides, teachers, or other staff to be present at parent leadership meetings. Their presence will make parents feel the meetings are an opportunity for two-way communication. The educators need a time and place--other than teacher/parent conferences which already have an agenda--to listen to things parents have to say that will help the school respond appropriately to their children's needs and culture.

(2) There needs to be a committment to parent involvement from teaching staff, building principals, and administrators and policy boards.

If the principal, for example, is not committed to parent involvement, it is very difficult to work around this. Teacher's evaluations are dependent on the principal and it will be hard to gain their cooperation if the principal looks upon parent meetings as a waste of time. The principal is responsible for scheduling use of the building--having access to suitable rooms, the promise of needed custodial time, and meeting dates that will not conflict with other programs may all be jeopardized if the principal is not behind the program.

On the other hand, the principal needs to be backed up by the school administration to be willing to ask staff to put forth the effort that is required for a good parent program. And the administration needs the backing of policy boards in order to

justify the staff time and the inevitable expense that goes into offering a good parent involvement program.

Parent Leadership Training encourages parents to visit their children's school. If the parent goes to the school and is met with rude behavior by someone in the office, or is told by the teacher to come back at another more convenient time, the parent will feel rebuffed and be unwilling to make such an effort again. Improving communications with parents must be two-way--school personnel committed to welcoming and listening to parents, as well as parents willing to make the effort to come to the school.

3) Attendance at training and planning conferences with other districts.

There are two reasons for this. One, the wheel does not need to be rediscovered by every school district. Conferences and training sessions bring together people to share strategies for successful programs; discuss possible obstacles and how to overcome them; and if the conference or training sessions include planning time (as Citizens Education Center training did) with checklists to ensure that important small matters are not overlooked, this planning will be carried out efficiently--away from the distractions of phone and the conflicts for time always present in the home school setting. These training or planning conferences allow assemblage of a broad array of resource materials that can be acquired without extensive, time-consuming search.

The second reason for going to training or planning conferences is that meeting with other educators and parents who are engaged in developing a parent involvement program provides some very useful "energizing"--it is exhilerating to share your own ideas and successes, comforting to find possible solutions to what appeared to be insurmountable problems. Many of the first year replication teams put an exhausting amount of effort into developing their program and needed reenergizing to build up their enthusiasm for the next series.

These three appear to me to be the most essential elements to ensure a successful parent program: the most successful topics, strategies, etc. are the details that could come from the training.

INVOLVEMENT OF MINORITY PARENTS

Parent Leadership Training has been very effective in reaching many kinds of "minorities", e.g., those unaccustomed to participating in tranditional parent activities. This includes immigrant families, non-English speaking families, ethnic minority families, poverty level families, as well as others not thought of as minorities in the tranditional sense--fathers, single parents, and parents from families in stress for many reasons. All of these represent the people who do not ordinarily participate in the more traditional types of parent/school functions such as PTA's, Advisory Boards, Volunteers.

In order to reach these parents, however, the school must be willing to make changes in the way it seeks out parental involvement. Recruitment is a key element that requires a change. Schools have been accustomed to relying on announcing meetings to the general public, e.g., posters, newsletters, notices sent home with children. Most of the parents identified above as "hard to reach" will not respond to general notices, but will require a specific invitation, possibly more than one, plus the offer of assistance to overcome obstacles to attendance such as the need for transportation or child care, or the assurance that they will be able to understand what is going on (promise of native language communication).

The "convenience factors" mentioned above are very important and need to be reemphasized. Providing child care is essential--to the single parent, or if both parents are to attend, or to the families that could not afford babysitting. It may also be necessary to assure parents they can keep their children with them in the meeting without embarassment if they choose--using a sranger to provide "babysitting" is not acceptable in some cultures. Parents of a handicapped child may feel safer if the child

is with them, than trusting someone else to be able to respond to the child's specific needs.

Transportation is another key factor that is rarely considered by schools, but it is very important. Non-English speaking, or immigrant parents, have a very difficult time finding their way around even if they have a car to use. Many are unable to read maps or are afraid to venture into unfamiliar areas because their limited English makes them more fearful of getting lost. Parents may be unwilling to use public transportation out of fear of being out at night, or confusion about routes/fares/schedules, etc. Providing a "ride" to at least the first meeting by a familiar or trusted person may enable the family to arrange their own transporation to later meetings. Once they have found the meeting location by riding with someone else who knows the way, they may be more confident about finding it on their own in future meetings.

Car pools can sometimes be arranged after parents have become acquainted. Schools which bus children from distant areas may want to use the school bus system to provide transportation to meetings. If children accompany their parents, they can become the guides showing parents where to catch the bus, introducing the driver, and knowing where to go once they reach the school.

The schedule is important. If parents are bringing children, the meetings need to start and finish early enough so that children can get to bed at a reasonable hour. Meetings cannot be too long or fatigue will discourage the single parent who has no one to share the responsibilities of work and home.

Parent Leadership has resoundingly demonstrated that many parents who do not traditionally come to school meetings are very much interested in their children, and will participate if the arrangements make it feasible for them to do so.

Parent Leadership programs also demonstrated that the school benefits from opening up two-way communication between teaching staff and parents representing a different cultural or socioeconomic group. Many school changes occurred because of opening this two-way communication. Specific instances of such school change

that grew out of PLTP sites included initiation of ESL classes for parents, library acquisitions of books reflecting other cultures and using other langugaes. In another site, the problem voiced by parents of not knowing how to access services was solved by having a meeting in which community providers representing different social and educational services set up displays and talked to parents collectively and individually as they circulated the tables. Mostly, the changes reported were attitude changes--greater trust, more confidence by parents that the teachers were caring individuals, more willingness by teachers to have parents into their classrooms and more frequency of communication between school and home. Schools became more "user friendly" to the parents they served.

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO FUNDING AGENCIES: *Has the money invested in this program resulted in a program which increases the participation of minority parents in their children's education? Has the funding of this program resulted in a replicable model that can be transported to other districts?*

SUCCESS IN REACHING MINORITY PARENTS

The decision to fund this program was based on an application that demonstrated that:

1) Research has shown that parental involvement is a key factor in children's learning; and 2) proposed to develop a model that would bring about parental involvement with parents who have had very little involvement in public schools in the past.

The funding agency can be very satisfied with the program achieving this goal. The parents reached in the Yakima Valley--many of whom had no education, little English, few resources, from a minority group that has the "highest drop-out rate" of any ethnic group in the U.S.-- were definitely hard-to-reach parents. Despite some false starts, the project found ways to recruit such parents, ways to provide needed support services, ways to communicate with them on topics of interest to them--and in the process achieved a change in the attitudes of educators.

The adminstrators interviewed for this study said they felt that there now existed a different attitude about the Hispanic and migrant parents--replacing a belief that *"they really don't care about education"* with one of response they "they" really care a great deal about their children's education and will participate in school activities if the school reaches out to them. The Parent Leadership Training approach was something that filled a void--federal mandates have set up parent groups for advisory functions, PTA's have long provided school support functions (raising money, giving awards, promoting bond issues). In addition, many schools have extensive volunteer programs providing lots of services. Parent Leadership Training does none of these things.

Parent Leadership provided information to families who had never experienced the U.S. school system--by using videos, it showed parents what goes on in classrooms without their having the embarrassment of visiting the classes, or thinking they were being disruptive by having large numbers trooping through the building. It discussed things we have taken for granted that people know--who is in charge, what decisions can and cannot be changed, what special services are available. It described what can and should happen at parent conferences (there is no equivalent in many other countries). No other form of parent organization addresses this kind of information giving and sharing.

By providing a comfortable atmosphere (all sites said their meetings took on the characteristics of a support group), it provided an otherwise unavailable way to meet people (missing in our highly mobile society); and some opportunities to share and to receive both friendship and information. Parenting skills is something that seems to interest parents a lot--there are few places (except informal) where it is discussed. When educators present themselves as parents (rather than as educators), it is easier to achieve communication with parents who have been afraid to approach them as professionals who know all about education. This is apparently what happened in Parent Leadership Training.

Some of the replication sites were targeted specifically to minority families--specifically non-English speaking families, many of them new immigrants. At the first training meeting for replication sites, members of the teams from these districts said that they had tried a number of times to develop "parental involvement" in the past, without much success. They came back after their fall efforts very enthused at the approach used in Parent Leadership Training, feeling it was more successful than they had imagined it could be. The descriptions of these programs in Part Two of this study gives a picture of elements which made their programs successful.

DEVELOPMENT OF A REPLICABLE MODEL

Foundations usually look for programs that will become the "seed" that grows--that provides lasting benefits after the grant money is gone. One way of doing this is in the development of "models" which will meet a need in new settings beyond the one in which it was developed.

The Parent Leadership Training program has certainly achieved this goal. The high number of applicants for the replication in the very first year in which dissemination to new sites was tried, indicates a very high interest in parental involvement across the state. The enthusaistic reaction to the training by participants indicated that they felt the training and materials were very worthwhile, which indicates that the materials developed are also a benefit that will outlast the grant period. Most replication site teams expressed the opinion that the planning checklists were an indispensible time saver (assuring that all key elements were assigned and people knew who was doing what). The curriculum for the sessions was also welcomed as a place to begin, although most sites took off in their own direction fitting the topics to the particular needs of their group.

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE SPONSORING AGENCY--
CITIZENS EDUCATION CENTER: *What features of the program appear to be in need of improvement, and what changes might be tried to overcome these deficiencies? What type of support is necessary from a training agency to facilitate trainers implementing Parent Leadership Training Programs?*

The evaluation of both the development site and the replication sites points up the fact that teachers do not have a key role in Parent Leadership Training in the present model. It is difficult to imagine a true "partnership" between educator and parent without a more active engagement of the "educator" part of this equation. A number of other studies of parental involvement programs have pointed up that it is frequently as necessary to train the educators how to communicate with parents (communication includes listening as well as telling) as it is to train parents. This is a missing element in the present program model.

In interviewing agency personnel, it appears that one of the original goals of the program was to identify parents who had been through the Parent Leadership Training program who would eventually become leaders in the program--trainers who would present sessions as well as being part of the planning process. Because of the constant changing of sites and adapting the program to new demands, the program never developed these "graduates" who would become parent trainers. In the replication sites, some parents did function as trainers--however, these parents were selected on the basis of past activity or employment with the district rather than emerging from the Parent Leadership Training program.

If the goal of helping parents grow into a leadership role in Parent Leadership Training is to be retained, the project may want to develop guidelines on how to select parents and how to develop the particular skills needed to conduct discussions, draw out participation, and similar leadership techniques. It may also want to collect data on what strategies are used to prepare parents to take leadership roles by different sites, and make a comparative analysis of these strategies as was done with various program elements in this evaluation to see which ones appeared to be most effective.

WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING IS NEEDED?

The five day training model used during the first year called for two days before the programs began, two days in the middle before they began the second series, and one day at the close of school.

It was the opinion of the evaluator that the first two sets of training days could hardly have been improved upon. The enthusiastic response on evaluations by participants confirms that this was a generally held opinion--full of superlatives. Both were well-organized, maximized opportunities for exchange of ideas, set aside planning time, were fun and energizing. Both had a mission--preparation for the series ahead.

The last day seemed to fail somewhat: half the people could not come because the end of school is a frantic time; there wasn't an immediate task ahead. It was to provide some closure to the year--a time of celebration. This may be needed. Or it might be that this final day of training could be dropped.

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO LEGISLATORS: *What has this program demonstrated about the type of support that would lead to greater development of parental involvement in schools? What guidelines could be used in the development, management and evaluation of such programs?*

In both the last legislative session and the upcoming one, legislation was, or will be introduced to fund, experimentally, some form of parental involvement programs. Legislators should find in this evaluation support for the idea that it is feasible to involve parents who, in the past, have taken little part in school programs, including parents of children most at-risk of dropping out of school.

Using the information gained from this evaluation, I would recommend the following guidelines for such legislation:

(1) It should ensure broad-based participation and committment to the program. It might be possible to require school boards to adopt a policy position on it before the district would be eligible for funding. Citizens Education Center required each team member from applying districts to sign a committment letter stating they accepted their responsibility for implementing such a program. Some variation of this may be realistic as a condition of funding.

(2) It should discourage single purpose use of funds (such as hiring one person to be a parent trainer, or hiring a consultant to come in and run the program). By setting criteria for awarding "points" in evaluating proposals, it can encourage use of funds for partial funding of a number of people, compensation for extra duty pay, allowance for substitutes to free teachers to do planning or compensate for time used in evening meetings, or similar budget uses that will keep the base of support for the program as broad as possible. Specific approval of use of funds for transportation may increase consideration of that as a program element. The criteria being applied here is that spreading the money around will widen the program support, and focusing it on an individual (or worse still a consultant brought into the district) would impede real "ownership" of the program, necessary for it's continued support.

(3) It should include within the budget a separate allocation to training agencies to offer conferences or training meetings such as those provided by Citizens Education Center so that these support services are available to local sites. And it should establish in individual school guidelines a requirement that part of the proposal include whatever costs are necesary to send personnel to such training or conferences. This not only ensures that sites get good materials to help them plan for better programs, but provides a means of dissemination for programs that are having success and want a way to share it with others.

(4) It should include some means of evaluation so legislators can know if they have achieved the goal of greater parental involvement, and whether there is a concensus that it is worthwhile enough to compete in future years with other uses of education dollars.